



US Army Corps
of Engineers®

The Sign Post

A newsletter for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Sign Program
Autumn 2008 Edition

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Welcome to The Sign Post.

By Rick Magee, National Sign Program Manager

This issue of *The Sign Post* is longer than those that have gone before. It contains news concerning recent sign-related policy issues, some regular features such as the maintenance corner and *The Sign Post* interview, and tips and changes regarding Corps SignPro. Please take a few minutes to read this edition of *The Sign Post*. As always, contributions for future newsletters are welcome.

Corps Sign Standards as a Branding Tool

MG Don T. Riley, Deputy Commander, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, has an eye for the Corps Castle, as do other active and retired Engineer Officers. General Riley notices when the Corps “brand” is not presented correctly, particularly on signs. Use of a consistent and correct Corps Communication Mark enhances the brand image of our agency.

MG Riley signed a policy letter on 14 August 2008 regarding the Corps Communication Mark or logo on signs. It is intended to enhance the Corps brand by encouraging the correct use of the Castle on signs. There are two parts.

First, all new *approach directional signs* installed by the Corps shall include the proper Corps Communication Mark. (In the Sign Manual this is also referred to as the “Signature”.) Formerly the use of the Mark was an option, but is to now be the norm. If approach directional signs to your facility are installed by a state or county, work with them to be sure that if they use the Corps logo on the sign that it meets Corps Graphics Standards. There is no requirement to replace existing approach directional signs at this time. New signs or those replaced for other reasons should have the Signature if at all possible.



No Castles or other symbols appear on *project directional signs* placed within the project boundaries.



The second part of the policy letter is a directive to Commanders to be sure that all standard identification signs are fully compliant with Corps sign standards by the end of the 2008 calendar year. These signs should have been compliant by 1998. Construction ID signs are included.

Use Corps SignPro to inventory your identification signs. Photos can be attached using the photo tab. Use the browse button to download pictures of your signs from your computer to SignPro.

Trademark or No Trademark?

The newly revised Sign Standards Manual on page 4-2 states, "Note the Signature registration symbol ® is not to be used on signs." This sentence was added to the 2006 update of the Corps Sign Standards, EP310-1-6a. The rule of thumb is if you can run an item with the Corps Communication Mark through the feeder of an office copy machine, it requires a trademark symbol. Identification, directional, and other signs with the Corps Signature are larger and do not require the ® symbol.

Regarding Restricted Signs

The Sign Manual and Corps SignPro include a common Restricted Sign, "Restricted / Authorized Personnel Only". A variation to that message that many projects use reads, "Restricted / Authorized Vehicles Only". This text has been added to SignPro as RES-04.

Remember, Restricted and Notice sign legends may be customized with the approval of your district sign program manager, as long as they do not circumvent the required approval of safety signs, per Chapter 6.2.b. of EP 1130-2-500.

Sign Maintenance Corner

If you have a fiberglass embedded interpretive sign panel, chances are it is looking a little worse for wear. The surface of the fiberglass may become pitted, scratched, and collect dirt or fungus. You can extend the life of your exhibit, restore its attractiveness, and make it easier to read with a little tender care.

Try cleaning the surface of the panel with isopropyl alcohol, commonly known as rubbing alcohol and a soft cloth. This should remove the dirt and fungus without scratching the fiberglass. Follow with a light sanding with very fine sandpaper. Treat the cleaned surface with an automotive quality clearcoat product that contains UV resistance.

SignPro Tips & Changes

We continue to chase gremlins and make improvements to SignPro. If you have a problem with a particular sign, please report it to the National Sign Program Manager by phone or by e-mail at Rick.Magee@usace.army.mil. Be sure to include the sign identification number in your message along with the sign type and location. The sign id can be found on the overview and message screens near the top of your screen in the medium blue bar. It is just below the magnifying glass tab in gray type. This number will help us find your problem sign to try to replicate and fix.

The following are some recent changes to Corps SignPro:

- *A search function.* This is found by clicking on the magnifying glass tab. The search can be used to locate signs by sign type, sign number, id number, or several other ways to sort and search for signs.
- *Links to Sign Manual* – Want to check on what the manual says about a sign? There are now hot links to the appropriate page of the sign manual. At the top of each page is the relevant page of the manual for that sign type. Just click on the blue page number next to the sign type and a new window will open with that page of the sign manual.
- *Viewing distance chart.*—there is also a new link on the overview screen that opens the viewing distance chart on page 2-6. You can easily consult the Sign Manual to check on the recommended letter size for a given speed, distance, and mode of transportation.
- *Map* – the map tab now defaults to Google Map. If you know the latitude and longitude of your sign you can enter that into the appropriate box and a map will show you the location. Be sure to use a negative number for the longitude (e.g. -72.225) or your sign will show up in the Eastern Hemisphere.
- *New sign materials* – Some signs now have the option for added sign materials including plastics (PLA) and high density urethane (HDU). If your sign does not show the material you have, contact the National Sign Manager to see about adding it.
- *New signs* – When additional safety critical signs are approved they will be added to SignPro. New safety signs are posted on the Gateway. Other recent additions are RES-04, Restricted/Authorized Vehicles Only, and TR-005, North Country Trail.



Tips for working in SignPro:

- *Sign status* – Remember to use the pull down menu to select your correct sign status. If you do not, the current default is “non-compliant”.
- *Pop-up blocker* – SignPro opens new windows for several functions, such as opening the sign manual, changing sign specs, selecting symbols, editing text on CID signs, etc. If you click on a button and nothing seems to happen, be sure your pop-up blocker is off.
- *RRW material* – Although we no longer purchase new redwood, existing signs can be inventoried using the sign material code RRW. Use RRW also for any other routed wood signs you may have such as western red cedar or some old routed pine interpretive signs.
- *Photos* – Remember you can download pictures of your sign and its location into SignPro. Be aware there is a 250 kb limit per photo, so you may have to save a compressed version on your computer before saving to SignPro. More than one photo can be used, so you can have a close-up showing the sign and a more distant shot to

record the location. For some sign types, such as INTERP, the picture will appear in your sign overview screen.

- *Printing for your sign plan* – You can print all the signs in a location by opening the location inventory. First select “show all” from the dropdown menu at top right. Next click the box to the left of the name of the location. You will see a check appear in the box to the left of each sign. You can unclick any signs you do not want to print. Then select “print sign” from the select action dropdown menu and click on the arrow in a circle. A new screen will appear allowing you to select which screens you wish to print for all the signs selected. Click on “print sign(s).” SignPro will create a form that can be printed as you would any other document.
- Need help? The Corps SignPro User Manual is located on the Gateway at http://signpro.usace.army.mil/signpro_manual.pdf or is accessible from the Help dropdown menu within SignPro.

Natural Resources Management Gateway

to the future . . .

A Great Source of Information

The Sign Program section of the Natural Resource Management Gateway is your guide to Corps signs. Check it out for answers to commonly asked questions. Need to check something in the sign standards? How and where to order signs? Want a list of all approved safety signs? Where can you read previous editions of *The Sign Post*? Who can you call for more sign advice? This information and much more is on The Gateway.

Now the Sign Program has a direct link from the Park Ranger Community of Practice home page. The link is among the Rangers in Action Gateway Sites near the bottom of the page. Or use the direct url: www.corpslakes.us/sign

Newly Approved Caution Sign – Floor Load Limit

Another new safety critical sign has been approved for use at Corps of Engineers facilities. This new workplace safety sign is a caution sign to be used when a licensed engineer has calculated a maximum safe load limit for a floor.

The new sign will go into the Corps system as SCA-37. It follows the Grid B layout found on page 11-3 of the Sign Standards Manual, EP310-1-6a. Use the panel sizes with the legend sizes as shown on the chart on that page.



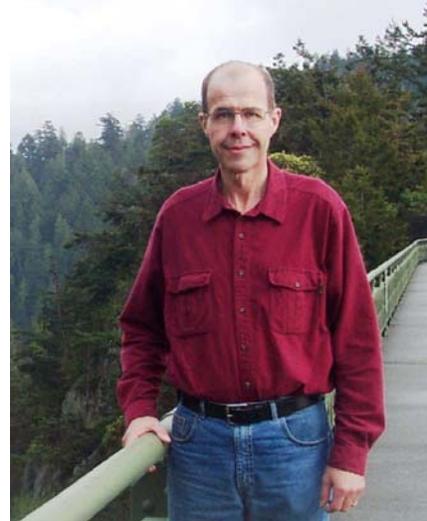
All proposed safety signs are reviewed by the Sign Advisory Work Group to ensure the proposal meets the Corps sign standards before a recommendation is sent to HQ USACE. As safety signs are considered a Corps policy issue, HQUSACE must approve the application before the sign becomes part of the Corps system and can be used at USACE facilities.

The Sign Post Interview: John Derby of the Sign Advisory Work Group

There is a new guy in town, actually two new members on the Sign Advisory Work Group. John Tennery of Tulsa District represents the Southwestern Division in place of the recently retired Jack Johnson. The new member in the Northwest Division is John Derby. John Derby has graciously subjected himself to the infamous *Sign Post* interview.

Sign Post. -- How long have you been with the Corps?

John D – Well, I attended Slippery Rock University with Jack Nichol from the Huntington District who also serves on the Sign Advisory Work Group. Jack graduated a year ahead of me. I started my career in 1982 working in the Pittsburgh District Office for Peter Colangelo as a seasonal Park Technician. Jude Harrington, now at Raystown Lake in central Pennsylvania, and I were the new kids on the block. Jude was a Co-Op student in 1982 and together we wore the Freddie the Fish costume sharing the Corps water safety message to several schools in and around Pittsburgh. I worked a total of 22 years in Pittsburgh as a park ranger.



Sign Post. -- Where have you worked for the Corps?

John D – My first flood control assignment was at Mosquito Creek Lake near Cortland, Ohio, where I was the project's first park ranger. Back then I lived on site in one of the project houses built for the dam tender and maintenance man and having to split a GS-04 pay check two ways I lived in that dwelling for 90 days without heat or any furnishings. I slept in a sleeping bag most of the time. From Mosquito I transferred to Mahoning Dam near Dayton, Pennsylvania, and in 90 days transferred over to Crooked Creek Lake near Ford City PA in the summer of 1984 where I worked for Tom Fleeger who just recently retired from the Corps. I have also worked at Loyalhanna Lake when Pep Persio was the project manager, and at Shenango River Lake. I even did a stint making signs at the old Loyalhanna Lake Sign Shop when Dave "Squirrel" Johnson operated the shop. I have experience building HDO and Aluminum sign panels and mounting frames. I worked there for about one year. I also worked as an Outdoor Recreation Planner in Pittsburgh for one year. In 2004 Pittsburgh went through a Reduction in Force (RIF) and I took a voluntary transfer to the Nashville District where I worked for two years at Cordell Hull Lock and Dam under the direction of Toni Rushing in 2004-2005 and Mark Herd from 2005-2007. Since the summer of 2007 I have been a Natural Resource Specialist in Seattle.

Sign Post – How long have you been involved in the sign program?

John – I have used a post hole digger, rock bar, power auger, and brute force for 24 years at most of the already mentioned projects digging holes for signs. While stationed in Nashville some of the rangers dubbed me 'Digger' while others dubbed me 'The Hammer'. I started working with signs when we had the old Meeker Sign Manager program and currently serve as the subject matter expert for SignPro in Seattle.



Sign Post – What is the funniest or strangest sign you have seen?

John - That would have to be the signs in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan that tell the driver ‘Do Not Pass When Opposing Traffic Present’. The second sign is the one about “No Parking on Dam Road”.

Sign Post – What is your favorite memory working for the Corps?

John – Rick, in 25 years with the Corps there are hundreds of funny experiences from my Park Ranger days and to put one ahead of another is very difficult. I have two that come to mind. The first was when I was asked to rescue a dog that had fallen off a scenic overlook cliff at Crooked Creek Lake. I had to reach the dog by boat and when I asked the owner if her dog was friendly she replied with the classic Peter Sellers line from one of the *Pink Panther* movies, ‘No my dog does not bite.’ Bending down to scoop up the crippled dog, the Basset Hound bit my nose that required two stitches to my nose and an interesting accident report. The second experience also happened at Crooked Creek Lake when I went to make a flood control gate adjustment for the Hydrology Branch. I was to increase the rate of flow by lifting the sluice gate from its five foot opening to a seven foot opening. Somewhere in between reaching a six foot to seven foot opening the old rusty flat braided cable broke allowing the 6’ x 13’ ten ton sluice gate to drop rather quickly shutting down the control tower with a mighty thud. That took some explaining on my part. [Editor’s note: Been there. Done that.]

Sign Post – What would you like me to share about you?

John – First and foremost John loves to tell a story that relates to the question you’re asking. Although this year in his Leadership Development John has had to make changes in how he delivers his answers, since not everyone is up for a ten minute dissertation to get his point across. [Editor’s note: Whatever the question, John has a story.]

John served two tours with the Lewis and Clark team. He was present at the 2003 Kick Off in Washington, DC, and attended the Lewiston, Idaho, signature event. John is a survivor of gastric bypass surgery, loves to restore antique bulldozers or hit-and-miss gasoline engines from 1900 that pre date the modern day farm tractor. John loves old steam engines and collects brass steam whistles or old brass locomotive train whistles and brass bells. He loves Woodsman’s competitions and can throw a double bit ax 30 feet and hit a target. John holds a second degree black belt in Taekwondo. That’s good to know if you go camping with him, as he can make the kindling with his bare feet. John has two sons, Matthew, 26, who teaches music in and around Pittsburgh and Todd who is working in Philly as a councilor for a major university. John hopes to find a job back on the east coast to be closer to his aging father and has no plans to retire yet. There are too many stories to hear and to record

Sign Funnies



On the left - Is there a letter missing? Perhaps the text should be reworded?

On the right - What *does* this mean?

Have you seen a funny, bizarre, or just unusual sign? Send your e-photo of it to The Sign Post.



Success with Signs

We are always looking for new ideas to post on The Gateway. Share your ideas on sign management by submitting a Good Enough to Share (GETS) or Lessons Learned through the website, or directly to the MCX manager. It may also appear in a future edition of *The Sign Post*. If you have a topic to suggest or a candidate for the interview for the next edition of *The Sign Post* please let us know.

Contact Information:

Information on contacting UNICOR or either the Truman Lake (NWK) or Tully Lake (NAE) sign shops is found on the NRM Gateway Project Sign Management website at <http://corpslakes.usace.army.mil/employees/sign/signmgmt.html>

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The Sign Post an unofficial newsletter for Corps of Engineers people involved with the sign program. Contributions to *The Sign Post* are welcome. Send short articles, ideas, suggestions, or photos that you have taken of unusual signs via your District Sign Program Manager to the National Sign Program MCX.